3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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721 554 nition of his deed. Other than securing witnesses or presenting circumstantial evidence in support of his claim, he might take a formal oath that what he claimed was true. It is evident that in the confusion of battle a man might believe himself entitled to honors claimed by others. At the first opportunity after the fight, the chief called the warriors together, preferably before they arrived at the main camp.[1] But 554 the procedure varied from band to band and according to circumstances. One account has the leading warriors seat themselves in a semicircle. Near the opening of the circle was placed a buffalo hide. Some of the Indians danced to the beat of drums. A warrior rode into the circle, stopped suddenly, and plunged his spear in the buffalo hide. Music and dancing stopped, and the warrior under oath narrated in detail the circumstances connected with the deed which he claimed as a coup. When he had finished, he dismounted and joined his comrades in the semicircle, and the dancing and drumming were renewed. Then a second warrior was called upon. The same procedure was continued until each claimant for honors had told his story. Those seated in the semicircle either publicly recognized the deed as a coup or rejected the claim.

A scout who was out alone sometimes ran unexpectedly into an enemy, perhaps killing or counting coup on one. In such a situation there was no one to witness his deed; it was necessary for him to attest its truth. If he was a member of the Water Horse band, he did so by taking the buffalo-chip oath. On returning to the band, he signaled that he had important news. Before entering the camp, he waited for all the warriors to assemble. They all lined up in a row behind three or four buffalo chips, which were stacked on end, tipi wise. When they were ready, the scout rode in and speared a chip for each man he had killed or struck. With each blow he cried, *"A:he!"* If he had counted no coup, he merely walked around the pile and then [117] scattered it as a sign that the news he was bringing was true. The false asseveration of a coup brought bad luck and death.

554 The Comanches recognized two coups struck on the same victim by different persons. Subsequent coups received no credit. The Cheyennes counted coup on an enemy three times, while the Arapahos touched four times. In battle, members of one tribe counted coup

[1] Informant: Yellowfish.